

Mass Effect: Beyond

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Category: Halo, Mass Effect

Genre: Adventure, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Characters: Master Chief/John-117, Shepard (M)

Status: Completed

Published: 2012-10-02 03:52:15

Updated: 2012-10-02 03:52:15

Packaged: 2016-04-27 02:35:42

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 9,971

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: A hardcore Mass Effect fan's retelling of the respective ending, with an assortment of characters from similar science fiction universes. The presence of these characters allow for a new logic to unfold instead of the confusing "Space Magic" concept. So I hope when you read this, you come into it with an open mind and enjoy the ride and maybe come ready to learn.

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Prologue

Commander Shepard rose to fame after defeating the rouge SPECTRE Sarren, destroying the Reaper Dreadnaught known only as Sovereign, and saving the Citadel Council during the Battle of the Citadel. Though, Two months after his heroic actions, Shepard would fall at the hands of the Collectors. When in reality the destruction of the Normandy's Tantuls Drive Core, caused a break down in the space around the debris of the Normandy, and created a dimensional distortion that Shepard fell into, following the rescue of his long time comrade Joker.

Upon falling through the dimensional distortion, Shepard would arrive on what he thought was an alliance vessel, but in turn received a hostile welcome from the crew of the UNSC heavy frigate Pillar of Autumn as it was escaping the destruction of the planet Reach. During his time in this universe Shepard would help the great Hero Master Chief end both the threat of the Covenant and Flood. Though, upon entering the Slipspace rift to return to Earth following the end to humanities long struggle, Shepard was again transported to another universe.

This next chance encounter lead Shepard to the home universe of the Galactic Bounty Hunter known as Samus Aran. In the beginning each of

them were at odds over the new circumstances that had brought them together. As a once focused and cold Samus Aran began to slowly open to the presence of the charismatic and kind Commander Shepard.

Together in time they would end Samus's vendetta against the infamous space pirate Ridley. Though, during the destruction of his ship, Shepard would fall again into a dimensional distortion, this time as if by coincidence.

From that moment on Samus would begin a frantic search taking her to farthest reaches of known space for her newfound ally and lover, only to mysteriously disappear from the public eye and never be heard from again.

When Shepard exited this new distortion, he came into a world that resembled Earth during the 21st century. Though, during his first moments in this new world Shepard would come to the attention of the tyrannical combine forces.

Before he could be captured by the Combine forces that occupied City 17, he was rescued by a man that would become a guiding light and even greater friend during his time in this universe. For this was renowned Theoretical Physicist, Engineer, Hero, and Icon of the underground Gordon Freeman.

Together they would stop the imminent invasion of Combine forces from that already siege to Gordon's dimension many years prior to Shepard's arrival. With such an ally in hand and the revolution a success, Dr. Freeman and his colleague Dr. Kliener would attempt to send Shepard home with their own pseudo version of dimensional travel.

Unfortunately for this success by both the good doctors, Shepard was sent once again to another unknown universe. As the distortion opened to the light of this brave new world, Shepard fell onto a hard white metal floor, only to come face to face with another unknown figure.

As Shepard knelt on the ground recovering from the erratic nature of inter-dimensional travel, his armor let off steam from encountering intense environments within the distortions. Shepard looked on from behind his visor as he raised head to meet the gaze of the figure in front of him. For this figure was Vector 3rd Division Chief Engineer Shion Uzuki. Shepard would prove pivotal to the success of Shion's endeavors to stop Wilhelm and return the gnosis to Lost Jerusalem, and end their rampage.

In the end though, while attempting to protect Chaos and Nephilim as they guided the gnosis, Shepard again fell into a distortion caused by the already abnormal activity from the Compass of knowledge.

Shepard then fell into a universe in which a more advanced civilization attempted to destroy a world full of races amidst its own medieval age. There he met Fayt Liengod and his band of comrades that would go on to stop the planetary invasion. During his time traveling this alternate cosmos, Shepard would make a comrade out of the enigmatic young commander of Quark, Maria Traydor.

As he entered the distortion that would take the others to 4th dimension, Shepard fell into the very same distortion that had taken him through the multitude of universes. Though, this time the distortion had not taken him to a time or place amidst chaos.

As he fell out the distortion Shepard began floating. As he looked around amongst what seemed to be familiar surroundings, he recognized the surface of the planet he saw in the distance. With the very same reflection of the sun he had seen at the moment of his supposed death.

Shepard would fall to planet's surface as he continued to drift towards it. After falling to the planet's surface, Shepard would be lost for weeks until he was rescued by Cerberus.

After being comatose for weeks, Shepard would awaken to a world that had moved on without him following his supposed death. Shepard then amongst the turmoil of his rude awakening was again rescued by Cerberus.

During his first meeting with his rescuers, Shepard found out the truth of this new world after being informed by the Miranda Lawson, Jacob Taylor, and the enigmatic Illusive Man. Though, despite his disconnection with what had happened since his suppose death, the Illusive man rallied Shepard to fight a new threat that was seeking the annihilation of humanity. This threat was a race of mysterious insect like beings known only as the Collectors.

Shepard began his mission across the galaxy in search of clues, to better understand the nature of the Collectors, as well as a way to safely reach them beyond the Omega 4 relay. Along with his search for answers, Shepard was to recruit a team that was capable of stopping the most advanced civilization in the galaxy. As he traveled to the four corners of the Milky way Galaxy, Shepard recruited many old comrades and new comrades in his fight against the Collectors.

Though, during his travels around the galaxy, Shepard would reencounter the very same distortions in space that had taken him to the assortment of other universes, during his two years lost in time. For these very same distortions had brought Shepard's many allies that he had made during his travels to his dimension. For Samus, Masterchief, Maria, Shion, Gordon, and a new ally, Issac Clarke had become able to travel to Shepard's own universe. Some more able to explain their arrival than others to this universe, but some simply arriving by chance.

Shepard had welcomed the surprise, and instantly took on the help of the comrades he had made during his travels across the Multiverse. With his new comrades aboard the Normandy SR2, the ship itself had gained an even more unique cohesion, with immensely different knowledge bases, that each of the travelers had brought aboard. Each of Shepard's new comrades began applying their own knowledge to the large blank technological canvas that was the Normandy SR2, along with the abundance of upgrades that could be applied to each other's abilities, and own set of technologies.

This abundance of knowledge had allowed the Normandy to surpass its greatest possible potential, and during its maiden voyage into the Omega 4 relay, make a mockery of the technological prowess of the

Collectors.

Besides the Normandy's new capabilities, the small army that Shepard had amassed became an unstoppable force that in all consideration annihilated the Collectors.

Within time, the crew of the Normandy had become infamous around the Galaxy. With the rumored exploits ranging from, killing the Shadowbroker and even destroying an entire system controlled by the Bartarian Hegemony. Within time of these exploits though, Shepard and crew had been arrested by the Alliance for their actions against the Hegemony.

Most of the crew had been ordered to return their respective homeworlds, whereas Shepard and his comrades from the alternate universes had been stripped of their wares and equipment, and placed into Alliance custody, only to be taken to Shepard's home on Earth in the megalopolis of Vancouver.

For six months after their time on the Normandy, Shepard and comrades lived in obscurity. With this new found time away from duty, the new Normandy crew had begun a rigorous search for any possible data relating to the imminent reaper invasion.

When the first signs of the reapers had reached Alliance command, Shepard was called upon for advising prior to the imminent invasion, but like all civilizations across the Galaxy, their cries for help had come too late.

As the unstoppable force that was the Reapers descended upon the Earth, Shepard and comrades escaped on the now newly commissioned Alliance variant Normandy SR2.

As the Normandy left the orbit the Earth, Admiral Hackett had contacted the Normandy with news of a discovery that could change the tide of the war against the Reapers. All it would take is a trip to Mars.

After reaching Mars, Shepard would be reunited with longtime friend Liara T'soni, but would reencounter now militarized and indoctrinated Cerberus troopers. Quickly taking control of the situation within the Prothean research facility, the crew of the Normandy was able to prevent a Cerberus agent from delivering schematics of the Crucible to the Illusive Man.

With the Data for the Crucible in hand, what was left of the Alliance dedicated all available assets to its construction. During its Construction, Shepard would be sent to both recruit forces for a Galactic Armada, and collect scientific assets to hasten the construction of the mysterious Crucible.

With the support of his comrades from his own universe, and the other universes Shepard was able to eliminate part of the Reaper presence across the galaxy, cure the Genophage, unite both the Quarians and Geth, and eliminate Cerberus once and for all.

At this point Shepard was ready to take the fight directly to Reapers, with the key to victory looming over the skies of London. Shepard at this moment was ready to lead the largest united force in galactic history to combat the reapers, retake the citadel to use in

combination with the Crucible to hopefully finally defeat the reapers.

With the invasion to retake Earth finally launched, Shepard took to the city of London with the united galactic forces that made up the Hammer forces, as Sword fleet held off reaper forces in space waiting for the arrival of the Crucible and Shield fleet.

As Shepard followed the lead of Admiral Anderson, while acting as the tip of the spear for the ground forces, rushed towards a beam that supposedly acted a means of transit of human remains to the a closely guarded Citadel. The only thing that lay in the way of the ground forces was that of a single Reaper Destroyer.

With quick action by both EDI and Crotona, the missiles that had been lead to the front line by the ground forces, were successfully used to destroy the Reaper.

Now all that stands between Shepard and victory is the possible mysterious powers that lay hidden in the Crucible.

Shepard stepped forward exiting the vicinity of what was left of the London street block, stumbling forward suddenly feeling the pain of the injuries he had endured while making the approach to the beam. He then sat on a raised portion of concrete, and ripped off his helmet from the pressurized seals, and then dropped the T5-V helmet to his side, ending with a loud bang as he plopped to the ground.

He then raised his right hand to his forehead to find fresh blood, and then held out his palm and took a large breath. He could feel his bruised chest against the heavy base layer of his T5-V armor. Shepard then turned his gaze to the beam, noticing what seemed to be the farthest distance he would ever have to run.

Shepard then heard noises from behind and turned, to see two figures as they began to approach him from behind.

"Matt, you okay" said Samus, as she approached with Gordon in tow.

She then rushed to his side and sat on the raised concrete as Gordon rushed to keep up, while Shepard turned his focus to his two friends. Shepard then tipped to the side subtly as Samus's large armor pushed against him. Gordon then took a quick breath and recovered after chasing Samus.

"Shepard, you alright? You just broke away from everyone without warning." said Gordon with concern.

"Yeah, I'm fine guys. I just needed to take a breather since were about to hit the final stretch." said Shepard as if the wind had been knocked out of him.

With concern in her voice, "Your bleeding Matt, you need to see a medic, come on we'll walk you back." Said Samus.

"Samus, I'm fine, like I said to Gordon, I just need a sec to breath." said Shepard.

Samus then turned to Gordon as her expression showed an immense rage.

In response Gordon raised his hands hoping to ward off Samus's rage, and his expression then turned to hesitation.

"Hey Shepard, I don't mean to leave so suddenly, but I'm going to check on Shion and everybody, you know do the boyfriend thing" said Gordon, as he ran off to return to the rest of the present Normandy crew.

"Listen Matt we're all here because we owe you for what you did for each of us. Some of us though, have even more invested than just our debt to you, some of us are maybe going to make a life here." said Samus as a sense of calm and relief came over her voice.

She then looked into Shepard eyes and brushed his dark red hair with her free hand, and then revealed her right hand as the proto-canon covering her hand unfolded. She then took her right hand and placed it on her stomach. Shepard then looked to her hand.

Samus then took a breath and said "Matt, I'm going to make a life here, with you, I never planned on finding a way home, I've seen what life is like here on Earth, before the reapers, I want it back just as much as you do, and I want to experience it with you even if it means giving up everything I left behind. Besides, that life I wanted to make with you here, it's already on its way."

Shepard's face then turned to surprise. "Wait a second, you mean yourâ€|? And the last time we were together was hours before we attacked the Chronos station." Said Shepard as his voice became lighter with every word.

A smirk then came over Samus's face. "Yeah , I'm here for the long haul, Commander, as long as you are." Said Samus

Shepard then took her hand and held it, and then leaned over to quickly kiss Samus.

As Shepard leaned back, he leapt, and lifted Samus into his arms. "Let's go my love we have a war to win!" said Shepard.

"You are so cheesy, but it's good to have you back, and by the way I'll take on the Shepard name as long as I get to pick the name." said Samus as she jumped out of Shepard's Arms.

Form the vicinity of the city block Masterchief and Garrus began walking over to the both of them.

"Ah, I hope were not interrupting anything." Said Chief in his always deep emotionless voice.

In response "Oh nothing, just discussing life plans" said Samus jokingly.

"Well I hope were not interrupting, but Shepard we have to go, the beams waiting for us." said Garrus in a serious manner.

Shepard turned to the ground, and then picked up his helmet and looked to the sky and then secured his helmet, with the sound of the seals coupling to the helmet, becoming tight and secure on Shepard's head.

"Right let's get going, and lets finish this fight." Said Shepard jokingly.

"That's my line" said chief.

"Samus, then leaned over to kiss Shepard's cheek, before putting her helmet back on and then saying "Remember we're counting on you". She then returned to group in the distance.

"Whos we" said Chief and Garrus in unison.

"We're having a kid." Said Shepard with confidence.

Shepard then walked between them and headed towards the group.

As he returned to his fellow crew members, he looked around to see, EDI, James and Isaac discussing the events so far, Gordon and Shion readying their weapons and equipment for the approach, Tali, Maria, Liara reminiscing up to this point. And then Anderson and Javik speaking about what may happen in the appraoach, while Chief and Garrus tried to figure out what had happened between them and Samus on the hill. While Samus ran a diagnostic over her canon one last time.

Shepard was then flagged over by Anderson, and picked up his pace to join Anderson and Javik.

"Commander you ready? Were all clear on this end and many of the other battalions are making their approach before the next wave of destroyers. The Lt. Commander is also making her way from our eastern flank, after the ground we lost. We're going to have many able bodies for when we hit the beam, but Hackett has just warned Hammer that Harbinger and a small group of Reapers are on their way, so we have to go now." said Anderson in his always commanding and Confident manner.

"Admiral, Commander. May I say that any ground forces will be easily cut down including the vehicles, during under our approach to the beam. I know this is strange, considering the source." said Javik as he patted the Mako personnel carrier within reach.

"We could only figure as much Javik, but this may be our only chance." said Anderson.

Javik then put both his arms behind his back and straightened himself up. Anderson then began walking towards the corroded landscape, with both Shepard and Javik following.

He then raised his hand, to point towards the beam and said "Shepard we go now gather the rest of your team, I'll call my men, and we'll start the run, we're going to be annihilated if we wait any longer." Said Anderson.

Javik and Shepard then ran off to return to the rest of the crew as they made last minute preparations.

"Commander, I'm ready whenever" said Javik.

"Roger, Javik. Tell the others I'm going behind, If harbinger is coming, I'll make sure he's distracted for a minute at least." Said

Shepard

The two then separated and headed in opposite ways to gather the team.

"Everyone to me, were going now, let's go. Samus, Garrus, Gordon, Chief, Shion your with me. James I'm counting on you to lead the first team."

With a quick salute James ran to gather his team. Shepard's team then gathered around him in, with Garrus running behind.

"Sorry Shepard, just giving Tali my own good luck charm" said Garrus

"Right. Everyone ready." said Shepard.

"We're ready Shepard, just give the signal" Said Chief.

"Ready Matt." Said Samus

"We're both ready here" Said Shion.

"All ready on this end Shepard" said Garrus.

"Then let's finish the reapers off once and for all!" yelled Shepard, before running towards the hill.

Both teams then began their accents up the corroded hill. Shepard then stopped atop the hill, as all those who finished their ascent had stooped. He met Anderson's gaze from down the way. Everyone then looked down into corroded landscape where the beam lay.

A loud boom then came from across the landscape followed by a roar, as Harbinger landed opposite the Hammer forces waiting on the hill.

In response, Everyone on the hill leapt into the ruined landscape all letting off a loud battle cry "For Earth, For Palevan, For Thesia, For Tuchunka, For Ranoch, For Sur'kesh!" each of them roared. For at this moment a united Galactic front charged onward towards an enemy that was infinitely more powerful, without fear or hesitation.

The Normandy crew then leapt into the landscape as fighters, VTOLS, Makos, and hovercrafts came over the hill. As everyone around the two teams began their own rush towards the beam, Harbinger released multiple beams that turned those ahead of The Normandy crew into piles of ash.

Chief and Samus then began running ahead of Shepard, with Shion and Gordon just behind, as each of them passed Shepard. Garrus then slammed into Shepard's shoulder.

"Let's go, don't slow down now!" yelled Garrus.

Shepard then darted after his team, and as he approached the bright light of the beam began to consume everything in view. Everything around Shepard was being destroyed by Harbingers beams, as he continued towards the beam.



As he continued down towards the beam Shepard dodged the barrage of both debris and beams that lay his wake, while trying to fire off a few shots from his M-76 revenant.

Without warning, a MAKO crashed before Shepard, but before it could blow a large blast of energy sent the MAKO flying to Shepard's side, allowing him to slide beneath it and recover into a sprint. Returning to his sprint, from nowhere Gordon approached Shepard with Shion in tow, at the same pace, and nodded in acknowledgement at Shepard.

With a possible entry way in site, Samus appeared from Shepard's blind spot, and stopped the group. She then dropped a Shield array to the ground that engulfed the group, and by surprise the Chief ran into the array just in time.

Returning their views to the beam, the array suddenly shook as a large beam from Harbinger struck the shield.

As the shield broke following the blast, Samus charged her Proton cannon and let off a beam that struck Harbinger by surprise.

Everyone then darted for the beam as Harbinger continued firing towards them.

As he reached the small entry way of the Beam, Shepard paused and turned, to see that his team had outrun James's team during the approach. As Gordon, Shion, Garrus, and Chief ascended into the beam, Samus paused to meet Shepard.

With the sound of both Harbinger and the Beam bearing over, Samus yelled to Shepard "I know what you're doing and I'm staying with you." said Samus.

Shepard then tuned to her, and acknowledged her with a nod. Each of them then drew their weapons and took up positions behind large pieces of debris that lay near the pillars of the beam entryway, Samus with her Proton Canon, and Shepard his Revenant.

James rushed the beam with the rest of his team as they stayed through the remains and debris that had been created by Harbinger.

Before Harbinger had a chance to take a shot at them, Shepard ran out from cover and focused his fire on Harbinger as a distraction. Harbinger refocused his efforts on Shepard without luck; from behind cover Samus had switched her ammo to shoot out the shield arrays to protect Shepard.

Shepard took each glancing blow in stride which allowed the first team to rush by, without issues. The debris itself continued to slam against Shepard's armor with a massive concussive force which caused him to stumble and even lose his footing in the shield arrays at times.

Before Harbinger could strike again, Shepard dashed towards the beam. Samus then reached out her free hand and grabbed onto Shepard's, before both of them jumped into the beam.

Shepard's T5-V on board VI tinted his visor as he stared directly into the light that both him and Samus were headed towards. The beam itself propelled them with an astronomical force that barely allowed them to hold on to each other.

Struggling from the force of the beam, Shepard looked outside the blinding light to see a layer of clouds whisk by, followed by the reflection of the sun against the surface of the Earth.

Shepard then turned to face the light of the beam, as Samus gripped his hand harder while struggling against the force of the beam.

The light then dimmed as they continued on, until the environment became dark and the force suddenly disappeared. In a brief fall Samus and Shepard, slammed against a hard and somewhat slimy surface.

Samus then raised her upper body, only to notice a gray sticky residue, with what looked like gore to her left. Samus then rose to stand only to see a hall full of bodies, with nothing but darkness concealing even more bodies from her line of sight.

Shepard then rose from the ground, and patted his throbbing head. Shepard then saw the many corpses the reapers would use for the construction of other Reaper life-forms

"My God" said Samus in shock.

"I know this is exactly what we saw in the Collector base, but being this close up is just disgusting. You never get used to this, you know?" said Samus with a sense of disgust

Shepard turned to meet her gaze, "Yeah, no matter how many time you see this type of so called "Salvation", you just can't get used to it." Said Shepard.

Both then took their free hands and then patted the side of their helmets to activate lights from their armor. Shepard and Samus then walked forward amongst the remains of the Reapers prisoners.

As the path opened up, a light appeared ahead of them. As it came closer, Gordon appeared from the darkness with a light on his suits shoulder.

"Samus, Shepard, we've been waiting for you, everyone is just up ahead, but there is something blocking us from going on ahead. Everybody is looking for a way around." said Gordon as he rushed to explain the Situation.

"Thanks for play by play, and coming to get us Gordon" said Samus.

The group then began heading on towards the end of the hall.

"Anyway how are you, and how's everyone else?" asked Shepard with concern.

"Well besides some bruising and cuts from the flying debris I'm golden, as for everyone else it's the same story mostly, the worst honestly is James, he seems to have acquired a massive leg cramp on

the run down." Said Gordon Jokingly.

"Well its good to see that morale is still up, and everyone's ok. My question is though, did anyone else make it here ahead of us?" said Shepard

"Some last minute com traffic says that Anderson might have made it ahead, but I couldn't tell with the complete frenzy all of us just went through." Said Gordon

Behind Shepards visor his expression turned more serious, he then broke away from his comrades, and stormed down the dark hall dodging the scattered remains. As Shepard stormed off, Samus reached her free hand out in attempt to calm him, but she would be too late.

As his footsteps echoed from down the hall, everyone waiting at the door turned to see the lights of Shepard Armor envelope the area with light, but as he ran through the group, Shepard then slammed against the wall, with no sight of Anderson amongst his comrades.

Shion, Chief, and Tali then approached Shepard.

"Shepard, you alright?" said Tali with concern.

"Shepard?" said Chief.

"Matt, are you okay?" said Shion.

Shepard then stopped slamming his fists against the wall, but continued to stare down the wall. With a sense of anger and concern in his voice, Shepard responded, "he made it through here ahead of us, or maybe a different way, but Andersons ahead of us, I know it."

EDI then walked over to the group.

"Shepard. Isaac , Shion, Garrus, Masterchief, Cortana, Gordon, Tali, Liara, and I have made many attempts to somehow access citadel control, and even evoke a response from the keepers amongst the debris, but the obstacle ahead doesn't respond to any form of communication." Said EDI, as analytically as always.

As the rest of the group began to gather, Samus and Gordon caught up. Shepard then raised his hand again to slam the wall, but without warning the wall suddenly broke open.

Everyone then walked into the opening. The wall opened into a walkway suspended above what was an unknown part to the citadel.

As the group walked forward, each of them expressed awe from the site of both what lay below and above them, but then each of them turned to see what lay ahead. The walkway itself opened to the entirety of the citadel, with the sprawling metropolis making up the entirety of the view.

Ahead though, was a platform that was suspended out from the ring of the presidium. Alone though was a terminal with an alien interface, but standing at the terminal, was Anderson.

Shepard then rushed down the walkway to Anderson.

"Anderson!" Said Shepard as he yelled.

Turning to meet him, Anderson stumbled forward.

"Shepard, I can't" said Anderson as he struggled.

As if from the shadows, the Illusive Man appeared, with his right hand hanging before him.

"Shepard. Anderson. I've been waiting" said the Illusive Man in his always cool and calculated manner.

He then clenched his fist. Shepard and Anderson then suddenly clenched and stumbled at the motion of his hand.

"What have you done to yourself!" yelled Anderson.

Anderson then grunted and coughed up blood.

"I've gained "control" of the power that is the Reapers, and now I've taken control of Humanities destiny. With this power I can at last cement Humanities place in the universe, and even raise us above the Reapers, and then overtake the obstacles that lay beyond in the void of space." said the Illusive Man cool and confidently.

On the walkway everyone drew their weapons and raised them towards the Illusive man, but stood idle as both Shepard and Anderson remained at the clutches of the Illusive Man. The group simply didn't know to what extent the Illusive Man's power reached.

Still struggling, Shepard responded "You don't understand that you're attempting to take control of things beyond our understanding. The leviathans themselves ran in fear of the Reapers. This is technology that has been misallocated for nearly a billion years, and you want to sacrifice more lives simply to control it!"

Still struggling, Anderson fell to the ground. For the control the Illusive Man had was undeniable, but Anderson still fought on.

"You're already under their control, you're not controlling them. It's all an illusion, The same thing happened to Sarren you fool!" said Anderson.

"You all lack the foresight to even see what I could do with this power, so what if I have been deformed by these implants, I have ascended past you. I will use this ascension to end you, and then end this war, and finally take what rightfully belongs to Humanity." Said the Illusive Man.

Shepard then forced himself to face the Illusive Man, and angrily responded "Your just like the leviathans, you think yourself a god because of this "Power" you have, and then try to control something beyond your control. You each attempt to correct what you see as an imbalance, when in reality it's simply part of a civilizations growth. You each attempt to usurp a civilizations attempt to understand its own advances or mistakes."

"So we each attempt to dominate the grand scheme, which in turn

ultimately will cause for our own self-destruction without control. You all lack this understanding and want this "Chaos" that only freedom can provide. Organics vs. Synthetics, Freedom vs. Domination, it doesn't matter. This is our chance to rise, and you can't see it. You and Anderson can't see what I see!"

A loud boom then engulfed the room, and without warning a large wound appeared just above the Illusive Man's chest. Shepard and Anderson suddenly broke free, while the Illusive man stumbled over to the edge of the platform, before falling face first off the edge of the platform. Everyone then looked atop the walkway to see standing Masterchief with a readied Widow Sniper rifle, as smoke came from the barrel.

"Tell that to the Reapers" said Chief.

Anderson then turned to finish what all of them came to do, and open the citadel arms for the Crucible. As the arms opened the crucible itself approached, and then docked with the Citadel. After finally locking in just above the Council tower, a strange light began to show, that even ships in the distance could see.

After opening the arms from the council, Anderson fell to the ground. Behind him, everyone then rushed down the walkway.

Shepard then ran forward to Anderson, still tripping as control slowly returned to his body.

"Anderson! Anderson stay with me" yelled Shepard.

Anderson then Grunted back to life, and then struggled to get up and sit on the ground. As he rose, Anderson fell back but was caught by Gordon and Shion.

"Thank you both, I'm sorry, I just need a moment of rest." Said Anderson, while out of breath.

Shepard then Knelt down to speak to Anderson, as Samus rushed to his side.

"Commander!" said Anderson.

"We did it Anderson." said Shepard finally calm.

Anderson then raised his still able right hand, and pointed beyond Shepard.

"You see that Shepard, that is what we fight for. Not for duty, not because we have to, but because it's right!"

Shepard then turned still knelt on the ground at Anderson's side, to see Earth, in its always ideal and magnificent view.

"And we did it son, we finally did it! but you have to go and finish this once and for all!" said Anderson as he looked on to the Earth

"Stay with me Anderson, were almost finished, and I'm not going on without you." said Shepard.

"I just need to rest a bit, I'll catch up. I just need to take a short break after all these years." Said Anderson

Before Shepard could speak again, Anderson took his right hand and removed his Dog tags, and handed them to Shepard.

"You did good son, you did good, I'm proud of you" said Anderson before he closed his eyes.

"Anderson?" said Shepard with concern.

With the dog tags in hand, he then looked to both the dog tags for the Normandy SR1, and Andersons N7 dog tag, before clenching them in his hand.

Samus then put her hand on Shepard's shoulder, before he rose from the ground and turned toward the Earth and removed his helmet. Samus then leaned on Shepard as they both looked on towards the Earth.

Gordon and Shion then lay Anderson's body down to rest, as a silence came over the group.

Shepard then looked down with his eyes closed clenching the dog tags even harder; until his armor's onboard com broke the silence.

"Shepard! Commander Shepard!" said the voice

"Admiral Hackett?" said Shepard

"The Crucible isn't firing; it's got be something on your end." Said Hackett

"What do you want us to do Admiral?" said Shepard.

Before, Hackett could continue, the platform began to rise. Without warning, the Normandy crew scrambled aboard the rising platform. The platform itself then became enveloped by a bright light.

Looking upward to the ceiling, everyone noticed the ceiling suddenly beginning to open up. The platform continued to ascend upward until it reached an area that almost seemed to be outside the presidium.

Everyone looked around to see the battle against the reapers skill raging in space. Behind them, ships of many kinds hounded each individual reaper until it was nothing but pieces. Each Reaper Capital ship and Destroyer put fourth an even stronger resistance despite the aggression of the United Galactic fleet.

Gordon and Tali then turned to face a Beam of green light that lay in the distance, and to its sides a pipeline, and what looked like some type of power conduit. Each of them then noticed a light taking taking shape just down the path the platform had risen to meet.

What looked to be a young boy then emerged from the light, but the boy himself was made of the light.

He approached the group, and began staring at each of them, turning

his gaze to everyone, until he looked past each of them towards Shepard.

"Come fourth Anomaly" said the young boy.

The group then broke apart allowing the boy to see Shepard directly. Shepard then turned to meet the gaze of the young boy. He then walked forward to come face to face with the child.

"Who are you?" asked Shepard inquisitively.

"To you Anomaly, I am known as the Catalyst." said the catalyst in an authoritative voice.

Shepard's expression then became overcome with concern, as he faced the Catalyst.

"We need to stop the Reapers. Do you know how we do that?" asked Shepard

"Perhaps, I control the Reapers. They are my solution to the chaos." Said the Catalyst.

"What chaos?" asked Shepard with confusion.

"The chaos that each cycle faces a variation of brought on from the Created destroying their Creators. The Reapers are my solution to that chaos. They harvest the advanced civilizations that create the synthetics that will eventually destroy them without my intervention. Each harvested civilization is then reconstituted as a Reaper as a means of preservation. Each new form of life that is still too young is left until the next cycle, in an attempt to preserve them.

"I think it's fair to say we would rather keep our original form." said Shepard.

"No! without intervention Synthetics would destroy Organics. This form is your ascension" yelled the catalyst.

Shepard then flinched and stepped back.

"What are you?" asked Shepard hesitantly

"I am an intelligence construct that was created eons ago in an attempt to forge a lasting balance between both Synthetics and Organics. I embody the collective knowledge of all Reapers, and act as there guide." Said the catalyst

"So you're just an AI?" asked Shepard.

"As you are just an Animal." said the Catalyst.

"But you were created by the Leviathans. They sought to control all life as a race of "Gods", but only after they started losing control of their thralls, because of synthetics, they created you. You yourself embody they're supposed "ideas"." yelled Shepard as he became consumed by anger.

"Your nothing but an AI with flawed programing, from nearly a billion years ago, and have Ideals from a race of beings that had become

blinded by their own pride!" yelled Shepard with great anger.

"This solution you have is why every race in the galaxy is against you, were all in a war for survival!" roared Shepard.

"So you even acknowledge the Geth as a race, and this other unit before me, what is it to you. You seem to ignore the fact that Organics use Technology to grow, while Synthetics will use it to surpass you, in an attempt to understand their own existence." said the Catalyst coldly in response.

"I was created by the leviathans to create a solution. I offer you salvation in the form of reapers for the sake of preservation of your civilizations knowledge. My "ideas" you speak are part of my base programming, as I was born from the ideals of my creators the Leviathans. My previous solution though will no longer work. Your device the Crucible has created alternative "possibilities" that would have been impossible before." said the catalyst.

"I can offer a means of destroying the reapers, but such a method would not discriminate against just the reapers, it would destroy all synthetics as well."

"I can't sacrifice the Geth, or risk anymore lives." yelled Shepard.

"The emission of such energy could not be that precise, there is no "off switch" for the reapers." said the Catalyst in a cold response.

Shepard then turned to EDI, as she returned his expression with a look of worry.

"I'll never sacrifice a friend, I'll find another way." said Shepard beginning to smile as he returned his view to the catalyst.

"If you wish for all to survive, there are other ways." said the Catalyst.

"I can't ever save them after what you've done!" said Shepard, holding back his rage.

"I am only fulfilling my programming." said the Catalyst.

"Yes, you are aren't you? While that very programming has been flawed from the beginning." said Shepard as he whispered to himself.

"Then second method is that of synthesis." said the Catalyst.

Shepard's expression then turned to surprise.

"What do you mean by synthesis?"

"The very beam you see before you has the capability to absorb independent genetic makeups. Being that many of you have bio-synthetic upgrades, such a genetic makeup, could program the beam to distribute a bio-synthetic emission program. This emission of energy would also be programmed with an omni-lingual genetic program that would change the very basis of DNA." said the Catalyst.



"You mean it can force an artificial form of evolution onto the entirety of the Galaxy?" said Shepard as he looked to the catalyst confused.

"Yes, essentially, only with the help of the Mass Relays of course, as a means of relaying the programmed emission across the galaxy." Said the Catalyst.

Shepard then turned to his comrades, as his expression turned to worry. The thought of simply forcing all known life to evolve according to a forced evolution betrayed his very idea of freedom.

He looked to his comrades for a reaction to this proposition. Shion suddenly wrapped her arm around Gordon out of worry, as Garrus simply shook his head. Samus then looked to Shepard, and for the first time since his disappearance from her own universe showed worry. While the others looked either put off or confused by such an idea, even EDI began to show worry at the idea.

"I, think that we'd all rather decide our own path of evolution." said Shepard confidently as he turned again to look to look to the catalyst.

"I need to ask then? Is this how all of these methods work? They use the Mass Relays to spread the effect of the Crucible."

"Yes, it is the same for the method of control as well"

"What? The reapers can be controlled? You're saying the Illusive man was right?" said Shepard in surprise.

"Yes, but the one you refer to as the Illusive Man could have never controlled them. His ideas for domination and conquest would never have been accepted by the Reapers, especially since he was already under our control from the beginning." Said the Catalyst.

"Control is possible, but it would require you to revoke your corporeal form. Your consciousness and memories, would be assimilated, and become a guiding force for the reapers and change their purpose." Said the Catalyst.

Shepard then asked "So a copy of me essentially would control the reapers, and repurpose them?"

"If such a being would guide them like that yes. Though, with this capability would come the infinitely greater understanding the reapers have based upon the knowledge the reapers have attained from the past civilizations."

Shepard then looked beyond the Catalyst and gritted his teeth, suddenly reminded of those that had been harvested in the countless cycles before. He thought of the infinite number of lives that had been sacrificed simply for the mistake made by a race of beings who were to prideful. How each cycle had paid for the mistake the Leviathans had made eons ago.

Regaining his composure, Shepard then looked towards the beam, to see multiple ghostly figures standing before him. He looked to see

Legion, Mordin, Thane, and Anderson Standing before him. Legion nodded to Shepard, as the rest smirked and nodded towards him. Shepard knew he couldn't simply take anything of what had been offered by the flawed intelligence known as the Catalyst.

He then turned towards his comrades and smiled, he now knew what had to be done.

"So I need to ask, can the beam itself be programmed by any other type of means, perhaps if someone had the ability to manipulate matter to such a respect, and what would it take to aim the emission of the beam?" said Shepard suddenly overcome with confidence.

"Yes, but no such being exists in the universe, only now can such a machine like the crucible even perform a minimal change like those I have proposed." Said the Catalyst.

"Wow, you call those minimal?" said Tali in the background, as a subtle sound of laughter engulfed the area.

Shepard then turned and looked to Shion and Gordon, nodding to them. Both looking puzzled, and then looking to each other and smiling. Shion and Gordon then broke away from the group and ran past the Catalyst, and on to the walkway ahead leading to the beam.

Each of them then activated their own unique holographic interfaces, and began both scanning the makeup of the new interface the united crucible and Citadel had created.

"What are you doing!?" roared the Catalyst.

"Taking direct control of our destiny" said Shepard proudly.

"Tali, Garrus, Issac, EDI, and Liara, help them out!" yelled Shepard.

"You got it Shepard!" each of them yelled after running past Shepard and the Catalyst.

"You think you can simply usurp this power with the help of your Comrades!" yelled the Catalyst.

"Yeah I can, because as they figure out how to aim this thing better than you can. I'm going to take advantage of that very same power that I mentioned before." said Shepard.

He then looked to Maria. She then began to blush at Shepard.

"What do you want me to do?" said Maria suddenly worried.

"Maria, go ahead of us and figure out how we can reprogram this thing."

"You got it." said Maria as she rushed ahead.

"She has such an ability? But how?" roared the Catalyst?

"Doesn't matter, I don't need to tell you. All you need to know is that I'm making sure all life in this galaxy has a chance at

existence, without having to worry about the reapers anymore."

"Then I will resolve this myself" said the Catalyst as Harbingers voice suddenly came over the voice of the young boy.

The Catalyst then dissipated after walking beyond the group still close to Shepard.

James , Masterchief, and Samus then rushed forward.

"Commander what's going on?" said James.

"Well it seems that our friend the Catalyst has gone off to rejoin the battle, while we're left here with a tool that can literally alter the fate of the entire Galaxy, and we're just about to fire it, and you know, not mess up like that little jerk would have."

"You mean the Catalyst" asked Chief

"Yes" said Shepard jokingly.

"Alright then, me and Cortana will go ahead and try to help, got it." said Chief as he rushed forward.

"Commander, what can I do?" asked James still worried.

"Tell Hackett to order the fleets back, and then help anyone you can." said Shepard.

"Roger that, Loco" said James moving Shepard.

Samus then walked forward and pulled her helmet off to face Shepard directly.

"So you think this will work?"

"Yeah, I do. Because I got one hell of a team." said Shepard smiling.

"So if this works, then how do we escape, I mean really. This machine could do anything, and even the Catalyst really didn't do a good job of explaining the after effects."

"Well I considered the Idea of space diving." Said Shepard as confidence began to come over his voice.

"Well I have to say, some of use won't be ready for that but I'd love to do it again. It's been a while since I did a dive." said Samus as she began to smile.

Within what only seemed like minutes, Shion returned with James at her side.

"Everyone is just about to finish up Matt, and Maria is about to hit the beam. Though we can only guess at will happen to the relays at this point, but with Marias power and our changes, we can focus the blast form the Crucible to only destroy any Reaper based tech. As to what that means though, we don't really know." Said Shion.

"Commander, Maria's ready to go, and the fleets have moved away. Everything is ready to go." said James.

Shepard, James, Samus ,and Shion then turned to watch Maria approach the beam. Each of their expressions then became serious as they looked onto the beam.

Maria slowly walked to the edge of the walkway, and then looked into the light of the electric green beam. She then raised her hands, and suddenly a blinding white light engulfed the area.

Everyone then looked to the beam as the light dissipated.

The central beam then changed color, and turned to an almost heavenly white. The beam then began to grow in size, until it suddenly disappeared. As suddenly as the beam disappeared, the entirety of area began to breakdown.

Debris from the roof of the area began to fall, and explosions both large and small surrounded the Normandy crew as they looked on in disarray.

As the area began to shake, Samus quickly placed her helmet back on, and then ran over to Shepard with his helmet in hand. She then tapped his shoulder with the helmet, he then took it from her and quickly placed it back on.

"I think this means it's time to go everyone!" yelled Garrus from down the walkway.

"Well how are we getting out of here then?" yelled Gordon in response.

Everyone then turned to Shepard.

"We're jumping back down." said Shepard.

Almost everyone stared on in confusion towards Shepard.

"I like the sound of it." said Chief, slamming his fist into his hand.

"Shepard I think I can speak for all of us and say that, some of use aren't trained for something like this, especially a Turian like me." said Garrus sarcastically.

"Well I don't see any other way especially since the way up was a one way trip and well this place is about to blow." said Shepard.

Samus then walked forward, and threw out a small cube that suddenly emitted a bright light. Before the group then appeared multiple atmospheric entry packs.

"Sorry to anybody who's uncomfortable with the idea, but I barrowed some of Shions tech ,and well prepped for most eventualities, so yeah we are getting out alive no matter what anyone says." said Samus as she began to smirk.

"You heard the lovely lady; let's go, that's an order." said Shepard in agreement

As the room continued to breakdown, everyone looked to each other, and then to the packs. Everyone then rushed towards packs, and equipped them. Everyone without helmets then either placed them on or pressed a button near their heads to unfold a helmet from a compartment.

With everyone readied, Shepard flagged them on to an area of the platform that had a direct opening to the surface below. Each of them then looked down to the city limits of London.

"Let's go!" yelled Shepard.

The first wave was lead by an almost anxious Masterchief, followed by Isaac as he jetted off with his suit boots to the surface below. Then Tali, Liara, and EDI followed suit. And like clockwork, Shion took Gordon's hand and leapt from the edge to the planet below.

The Second wave began with an again confident Maria Traydor, as she turned and nodded at Shepard and then jumped. James then ran into the jump with Javik following him.

Before Jumping Shepard looked back towards Anderson, Garrus and Samus then each reached out to Shepard and placed their hands on his shoulders.

"Matt I'm sorry, but we have to go, this place isn't going to wait for us to mourn and then leave." said Samus with concern.

"Shepard, lets go, we have to finish this for him" said Garrus.

"I know, thanks guys, but just give me a second." said Shepard with a sudden sadness.

"I'll see you bottom-side Shepard." said Garrus before jumping to the earth.

Still looking to Anderson, Shepard said "We have our freedom again old friend, I just wish you could've lived to see it"

Shepard then turned to Samus and nodded, signaling that he was ready. In union they both ran into the jump, with Samus converting into her ball form, and Shepard's VI overclocking his shields in preparation for the oncoming conditions.

As Shepard began his descent, Samus suddenly zipped by, but looking on Shepard could see his many comrades already ahead of him.

He then looked to his right to see a great white light near the center of the presidium. The light itself stayed in place, until a flash suddenly blinded him, and then a large blast of what seemed to be energy shot towards the Charon relay near Pluto, followed by a an even greater wave of energy.

This wave of energy engulfed Shepard and his comrades, and besides a slight distortion from his armors onboard systems, everything seemed to be fine.

Shepard then looked to his left to see a group of Alliance ships in the distance engaging a Reaper dreadnaught. From the side of the

Alliance ships, a group of Geth ships appeared and began firing on the Reaper.

As the wave engulfed both the mixed fleet and the Reaper, the Reaper suddenly stopped firing, and without warning exploded. The Alliance ships and Geths ships beyond the blast had been unharmed by the sudden explosion or the blast of energy that had engulfed them.

Shepard then realized that what he had done may have succeeded, but with all com chatter cutoff do to the conditions of the jump, Shepard continued to second guess what had happened, but still remained hopeful.

As he continued his descent, Shepard looked again to the Citadel. Only to see that the blast itself had literally caused the Crucible to break apart, while some parts of the Citadel had broken off as well.

Shepard then looked around again, and noticed that he and become engulfed by the atmosphere of the earth. Once again he felt the pull of gravity, and before tilting out his survivable approach vector, jets scattered throughout the surface of his armor suddenly fired off blasts of thrust strong enough to correct his angel of approach.

For without the onboard VI present to correct such a thing, Shepard would've begun spinning out of control. In which case, his brain would have been reduced to mush. Another worst case scenario, involved burning up in the atmosphere without the knowledge or capability to correct such a thing.

Shepard then looked down towards the surface again, and saw the first of the shoots being opened. Below his comrades preparing to land was the burning city of London. Shepard could only hope that the blast the Crucible had fired off had also affected the Reapers below.

During his continued descent Shepard could see those without the reentry packs, begin to burn up the atmosphere. Shepard then remembered the first time he saw the Master Chief pull off this very feat, during the Human-Covenant war, while something like this was new to many of his comrades but all too familiar from his N7 training.

Those higher than Chief suddenly released their own shoots, which signaled Shepard himself to follow suit. Below him Shepard saw his comrades focusing their approach towards an open piece of land, which looked to have formed from a large blast from an explosion possibly caused by the Reapers.

Shepard than looked around before being jerked into a stable position by his shoot opening. He suddenly became enveloped by a cloud, before falling through to see the broken city of London below.

Shepard then picked up speed in his continued descent, and suddenly touched down to make a hard landing with the tip of his feet. He braked by sliding and pushing his armored boots into the dry and rocky corroded soil.

Shepard then took his right and slammed it into the shoot release on

his left shoulder. The shoot itself then slid off his back, while Shepard slid into a kneel, and then took a large breath. He then ripped off his helmet and threw it to his side, only to reveal the immense amount of blood and sweat that had built up on his face.

He then rose from the ground, to see his comrades already taking to each other, either checking for medical or technical issues incurred during the jump. In front of him was Garrus helping up Chief from the ground, after his armor had locked up. To the left of them, Samus had emerged from her armor's ball form, and had run over to see to Liara, Tali, and EDI. To the right of them Maria and Shion, saw to a nauseated Gordon, while Isaac attempted to help up a now somewhat emotional Javik.

Shepard then plopped to the ground and sat, only to be followed by a large sigh of relief. Thinking he had simply lost sight of James, Shepard then looked to the edge of the open landscape to see James running up the hill towards a group of Alliance marines letting off cries of victory.

Ahead of the Group though were both Major coats, and Lt. Commander Ashley Williams, each leading the charge of Marines Towards Shepard and comrades. To the side of the Marines was that of a group of Turians lead by Primarch Victus.

Shepard then turned his head to the other hill to see the Geth, Salarian, Asari, and Quarian forces emerging from the ruins of the broken city, and all headed towards the Normandy crew.

And before he stopped looking Shepard looked to his right to see a horde of Krogan, each cheering loudly from atop the hill. With both Grunt and Wrex rushing towards Shepard, and each yelling "Shepard!"

His eyes then widened at the sight, before he was suddenly overcome by the fact that the war was over. Thoughts, of all the sacrifices of the civilizations that had come before as well as the sacrifices of his many comrades, and even the fact that a machine god couldn't even stop them from finishing off the reapers.

Shepard then turned to see Samus coming towards him.

"Are you alright Matt?" said Samus with concern.

"Yeah, I'm just kind of tired" said Shepard exhausted from the events of the day.

"Here let me help with that." said Samus with concern.

She then deactivated her cannon and revealed her right hand, she then opened her suit's medical compartment and pulled out medical gauze, to wipe off the blood and sweat covering his face. She then tossed the gauze to the side, and held out her hand. Shepard then took her hand, and rose from the ground to meet her gaze.

Shepard then turned to her, as they both began to smile at each other. From where they both stood, the Hammer ground forces roared in celebration, as Reapers continued to fall, while some slammed into the skyscrapers that made up the broken skyline.

Samus and Shepard then looked on to the east of the city as the sun suddenly broke the calm multicolored horizon. The sun itself then cast a brilliant light on the crater where many members of the ground forces gathered, while the reflection itself gleamed off the ruined Elizabeth Tower.

A calm silence then came over the gathering crowd as they all simultaneously turned towards the brilliant light of the sun. With his free hand, Shepard then pulled out Anderson's dog tags from his armor, and then held them up between himself and Samus.

"I know you miss him already" said Samus whispering to Shepard.

"I just wish he was here to see this. I wish they were all here to see this" said Shepard whispering in response.

They then turned to the horizon again, as what remained of the Hammer ground forces, all simply soaked in the first light of the bright tomorrow they had been fighting for.

End  
file.